

July 15, 2015

### **Why should my son enroll in STEP?**

*Q: My son is an American citizen who lives with his father in Florida. My son was born in Jamaica and lived here with me until last year when he decided to migrate. He is now spending his summer vacation here in Jamaica with me. His father is insisting that he sign up for STEP but I don't even know what this is. He says it is important because our son will be here during the hurricane season. What do hurricanes have to do with STEP? Does he have to do this in order to go back to the United States after vacation?*

A: We are glad that you are going to get to spend some time with your son this summer. His father is correct; it is a good idea for all U.S. citizens traveling abroad to enroll in STEP. STEP stands for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program and is a free, voluntary service for U.S. citizens and nationals traveling abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

By enrolling, your son will receive the Embassy's most recent security and safety updates during his stay in Jamaica, helping you make informed decisions about his travel plans. Enrollment helps the U.S. Embassy contact a U.S. citizen in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency. While we will do our utmost to assist U.S. citizens in a crisis, be aware that local authorities bear primary responsibility for the welfare of people living or traveling in their jurisdictions. To find out more and to enroll, please visit <https://step.state.gov/step/>, which can also be accessed through our Embassy website.

Your son's father may be concerned about hurricanes because your son will be in Jamaica during hurricane season, which began in May and ends in November. More information regarding guidance for U.S. citizens abroad during hurricane season is available at the Bureau of Consular Affairs public website [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov). It is especially important to keep all travel documents up to date and accessible during travel outside the U.S. If you live in or are traveling to storm-prone regions, prepare for hurricanes and tropical storms by organizing a kit in a waterproof container that includes a supply of bottled water, non-perishable food items, a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, any medications taken regularly, and vital documents (especially your passports and other identification).

While we hope your son's summer vacation will be full of sunshine and calm Caribbean breezes, it's always good to be prepared. Signing up for STEP is a great idea!

*You can find more information about how to travel to the U.S. on our website, [www.kingston.usembassy.gov](http://www.kingston.usembassy.gov) and the website of our authorized service provider at [www.usvisa-info.com](http://www.usvisa-info.com). Keep on top of Embassy news on our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/pages/US-Embassy-Jamaica](https://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Embassy-Jamaica) and by following @USEmbassyJA on Twitter. We also answer general visa questions on our Facebook and Twitter pages.*